



College Innovation

- This paper gives a summary of the SFC Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) College Innovation Working Group (CIWG) in developing the contribution of colleges to Scottish businesses – college innovation - and places that work in context. The plan for ongoing activities seeded by the CIWG are described and the proposed future direction for both the CIWG and college innovation more generally.

Recommendations

Council is invited to:

- Note the achievements of the College Innovation Working Group of SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the action plan currently being delivered.
- Comment on the forward strategy for further developing college innovation.
- Comment on the proposed deployment of the College Innovation Fund.

Financial implications

- The Scottish Government has announced a £500,000 College Innovation Fund for AY2017-18, delivered through the additional Government grant-in-aid to SFC for knowledge exchange activities (the former "SEEKIT" budget).
- The College Innovation Fund (CIF) will be used to establish and explore activity in the college sector, to an extent in partnership with national infrastructure currently funded from HE budgets.
- Funding approvals for specific activity will be managed through SFC's Strategic Funding Group.

College Innovation

Purpose

1. This paper gives a summary of the achievements of the SFC Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) College Innovation Working Group (CIWG) in developing the contribution of colleges to Scottish businesses – ‘college innovation’ - and places that work in context. The ongoing activities seeded by the CIWG are described and the future direction for both the CIWG and ‘college innovation’ are suggested.

Background

2. The economic strategy of the Scottish Government identifies innovation as a key pillar of activity to support inclusive growth. The SFC’s strategic plan recognises the important role that colleges in Scotland play in delivering the Government’s economic vision. The recently published Phase 2 report from the Scottish Government’s review of the Enterprise and Skills agencies¹ clearly acknowledged the role of colleges in working with employers to support our economy. This was emphasised further by the Scottish Government’s 2017 letter of guidance to SFC.
3. The SFC recognises the potential impact on the economy of developing and integrating the contribution of the college sector in the innovation landscape. We recognise the imperative to help the colleges to have a more visible impact on the Scottish economy through both educating students and supporting businesses. To provide focus and leadership in the initial phases of developing the collective college role in innovation, SFC’s RKEC established the College Innovation Working Group at its meeting on 10 September 2015 (RKEC/15/16).
4. A recent article sponsored by the Scottish Government in the Scotsman newspaper provides some illustration of how colleges can help business innovate and grow².

CIWG Action Plan

5. The working definition of innovation for colleges was informed by the report of the Reid review of the Innovation Centre programme³ as “***the development of new skills and techniques to improve business productivity applied alongside new technological innovation***”. This also helps couch the definition of

¹<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/06/1766/0>

²<http://www.scotsman.com/business/management/business-collaboration-is-key-say-educators-1-4483183>

³http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/InnovationCentresReview/Independent_Review_of_Innovation_Centres_Programme_-_29_September_2016.pdf

innovation in business friendly language.

6. With this definition in mind the CIWG Action Plan has been developed by the working group in conversation with key stakeholders. The actions outlined in the action plan have been taken forward by partners in the intervening months. A current copy of the action plan is given at Annex 1.
7. The actions in the Action Plan are designed to help achieve the integration of the Scotland's colleges as a core component of the innovation landscape of Scotland.

Highlighted Actions

8. The working group has taken a broad view of the role colleges can fulfil to support innovation in Scotland. A key area identified for colleges to be active in includes the innovative delivery of training and skills provision related to stated industry needs, focusing on vocational, professional and technical skills.
9. The current CIWG action plan is being actioned by partners. A copy of the Action Plan, with commentary, can be seen at Annex 1. The primary focus at the moment has been to establishing this agenda firmly with the college sector and key stakeholders. The CIWG is keen to see the prioritised development of the opportunities for the colleges to work with the Innovation Centres (ICs) and their business/industry partners. The CIWG has, as an initial phase, initiated two sub groups for construction and health - (working with the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) and Digital Health Institute (DHI) initially to explore activities which might be developed between the colleges and these ICs in support of response to industry challenges. We hope that this activity will generate exemplars, and highlight any issues such as with capacity that may need to be addressed, showcasing colleges as innovation partners of choice in the Innovation Centre programme vision. This will be important as ICs develop their business plans for phase two of the programme. There may be scope for collaborative working between the ICs as we have seen on other areas of their activities.
10. The use of Innovation Vouchers (IVs) in the college sector is also being explored to see how the vouchers might be developed to make them useful for the activities colleges can pursue with business. We are considering how IVs might be promoted within the sector and whether Interface may require further support to implement this. This work is being developed in conversation with the sector and was discussed at a sector-wide an event on 15 June, which has informed further development work.

College Innovation Fund (CIF)

11. As part of the report of Phase 2 of the Enterprise and Skills Review

(21 June 2017) the Scottish Government announced a College Innovation Fund (CIF) (£500K in AY2017-18) to support Scotland's colleges to work with businesses on innovation activity. The Government has asked the SFC to manage the funds from the former "SEEKIT" budget provided by Scottish Government as annual additional grant-in-aid. Whilst this has only been confirmed for one year initially, we hope that it will become recurrent funding to support the ongoing development of the innovation landscape and appropriate activities.

12. In AY 2017-18 the planned uses of the CIF will build directly on the work of the CIWG. We intend to support:
 - a. Innovation Centres (ICs) to establish activity in colleges in support of client companies, beginning with CSIC and DHI who are advanced in discussion with the sector. We will encourage all the ICs to work together with colleges where industry would benefit.
 - b. Innovation Vouchers and activity in Interface in support of college integration in the innovation ecosystem, co-developed with the college sector to meet their requirements when working with businesses.
 - c. Organisational capacity enhancement for sectoral development, potentially with College Scotland, CDN or Interface. Individual colleges may need capacity to assess the opportunities in their locale. And this will be critical in establishing leadership and direction for a college's own development in this area.
13. The last of these is vital as it supports the key stakeholders (colleges themselves) establishing leadership and direction for their own development in this area.
14. In addition to the development activity above, we recognise the value of promoting the rapidly building college innovation culture and are likely to assist in putting on a suitable showcase event to highlight the potential of colleges and the role SFC has played. We are also aware that the Scottish Government is planning a Ministerial announcement of the CIF in the autumn 2017.
15. We will finalise and communicate the use of the fund, and the criteria for applications (when appropriate) to the sector following discussion at this meeting and time this to fit with the Ministerial announcement.

The future of the CIWG

16. The role of the college sector in the innovation landscape has been considered and identified as a key strategic priority by the College Principals Group, Colleges Scotland Board and College Development Network. The sector leadership is engaged in this agenda and supportive of the approach taken by the SFC to date.

17. We recommend that the CIWG, currently functioning as a short life working group of RKEC, is developed and the ownership of the group transfers to the College Principals Working Group of Colleges Scotland. It is proposed that a sub group of that forum, with increased college involvement alongside the stakeholders and partners that have already been involved (current CIWG membership can be seen at Annex 2) is developed to allow this transition to happen seamlessly. If the Council agrees to this development of the group, transitional arrangements will be developed by autumn 2017.
18. To assist with the wider integration of college activities into the wider innovation landscape Audrey Cumberland sits on the Can Do Innovation forum, representing the college sector, helping to embed this agenda and raise its profile.

Further action

19. Consideration is being given to how we will measure and capture the progress and achievements being made in integrating and involving the colleges in this agenda. With the sectors help, metrics and KPIs will be established that can be monitored through the Outcome Agreement Process with institutions and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework used with the ICs. As the responsibility for the discharging of the actions and activities transitions to another forum, post CIWG, the importance of effective monitoring and measuring of activities will be discussed and developed.
20. The SFC is supporting this discussion and will help establish a baseline for college activities on an individual college, regional and national basis. Careful consideration will be given to the choice of metrics to ensure they support the desired outcomes rather than distract effort.

Risk assessment

21. This paper and its recommendations are considered a low to medium risk.
22. The SFC strategic plan highlights the role of colleges in the innovation landscape. Not to continue to develop the college innovation agenda would create a risk to the effective delivery of the SFC's strategic plan.

Equality and diversity assessment

23. No issues of equality and diversity have been identified as part of this developmental work. This will continue to be monitored and individual colleges and stakeholders would be asked to ensure that they have any appropriate framework in place to ensure equality of opportunity. The increased involvement of colleges in innovation support may serve to broaden access to highly skilled job opportunities for college students, including those from

deprived backgrounds.

Recommendations

24. The Council is invited to:

- Note the work of the College Innovation Working Group of SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and the action plan currently being delivered.
- Comment on the forward strategy for further developing college innovation.
- Comment on the proposed deployment of the College Innovation Fund.

Financial implications

25. The Scottish Government has announced a £500,000 College Innovation Fund for AY2017-18, delivered through the additional Government grant-in-aid to SFC for knowledge exchange activities (the former "SEEKIT" budget).

26. The College Innovation Fund (CIF) will be used to establish and explore activity in the college sector, to an extent in partnership with national infrastructure currently funded from HE budgets.

27. Funding approvals for specific activity will be managed through SFC's Strategic Funding Group.

Publication

28. This paper will be published in full on the Council website.

Further information

29. Contact: Andrew Youngson, Senior Policy Officer, tel: 0131 313 6519, email: ayoungson@sfc.ac.uk.

Annex 1: CIWG Action Plan

The following is the CIWG action plan developed by the working group with an update on progress being made against the actions. Prioritisation should not be inferred from the current sequencing of actions. Further actions, and their priority, will be added as discussions progress.

Supporting College Innovation

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue/Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
A1	Review the funding arrangements for ICs to allow better/more engagement with colleges	Ensure ICs have a clear mechanism by which they can support working with colleges	SFC should consider current IC funding arrangements and how they can be amended to allow ICs and Colleges to work together Clarification of ERDF funding situation in relation to SFC strategic intervention to support ICs to engage with colleges.	Discussions are underway to ascertain how SEEKIT funding may be accessed to help further engagement along with other activities.	<i>CIC</i> - Stephen Good <i>SFC</i> - Sophie Lowry	Deadline: 13 March 2017 - ongoing
A2	Redevelop the Innovation Vouchers for colleges and confirm funding arrangements / budget source	Help make IVs more attractive for colleges to use and review current funding arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose	Review how IVs can be more attractive to colleges and confirm how they are funded by the SFC and from which budget	Interface discussions with colleges: - No new Innovation Voucher applications from colleges since August 2016, although we are aware of a number in preparation. - A round table discussion with senior staff involved in business development activities along with curriculum leaders/heads from across all colleges will be convened	<i>SFC</i> – Andrew Youngson <i>SFC</i> - Gary Bannon <i>Interface</i> - Siobhan Jordan	Deadline: Event held 15 June 2017 Info being collected by both SFC and Interface for further development

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue/ Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
				<p>to work out where the barriers lie and whether solutions may be more easily sought by applying for Innovation Vouchers.</p> <p>- SFC/Interface College Innovation Vouchers 'Call to Action' – event on 15 June at CDN - Fact finding event for feedback to SFC/CIWG for IV further development</p>		Information will be fed back on 4 th September CIWG.

Coordinating College Innovation

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue / Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
B1	Consider potential models for cross- sectoral partnerships, including the potential of current national models such as the Energy Skills Partnership	Support CS and Principals to identify priority areas and industry drivers	Work with CPWG to identify possible sectoral/industry/stakeholder partnerships	<p>AC has spoken to the CPWG and has round table support for the College Innovation work.</p> <p>Jim Brown of Energy Skills Partnership to meet with SFC on the Skills agenda.</p>	<p>ESP - Jim Brown</p> <p>SFC - Andre Reibig</p> <p>SDS - tbc</p> <p>DAC - Grant Ritchie</p>	<p>Immediate – to assess current engagement</p> <p>Longer term – to establish models</p> <p>Deadline: Work with ESP /CPWG is ongoing</p>
B2	Build upon existing colleges groups and networks and integrate them with ICs, HEIs and other initiatives in	Identify if/how existing grouping might work to support / develop this agenda	Identify all pertinent colleges networks and groups and engage them in the colleges innovation discussions, seek their input	<p>- Scotland Food and Drink in conjunction with Interface are holding an event on 14th June on Scotland Food and Drink's newly launched Strategy - "Ambition 2030"</p> <p>- Representation from colleges has been sought [via Colleges Scotland]</p>	CIWG - Audrey Cumberford	<p>After next CPWG</p> <p>March 2017</p>

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue / Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
	the innovation landscape e.g. Sporting chance, Textiles Future Forum, Interface Sector engagement			along with HEIs and Research Institutes to contribute to the discussions on how academia can support the Innovation priorities outlined in the new strategy. - Mapping exercise of cross sectoral working which is being pulled together by Shona Struthers (Colleges Scotland) currently with Jim Metcalfe (CDN) for comment.		
B3	Continue to encourage each college to identify capacity to engage with businesses via the pan Scotland specialist facilities platform	Identify specialist facilities	Work with each college to identify appropriate facilities that can be promoted to businesses	CITB to invite CIWG members to next business Forum where there will be opportunity to engage with Industry	<i>Interface</i> - Siobhan Jordan	Deadline: April 2017
B4	Engage with Enterprise and Entrepreneurship at Student Level	Mapping exercise to asses level of activity currently underway	Use relevant stakeholders, Bridge to Business and SIE to engage and ascertain the current state of play and where the gaps are evident	Ongoing	<i>DAC</i> - Grant Ritchie <i>HIE</i> - Morven Cameron	Deadline: June 2017

The CIWG discussed Communicating College Innovation and felt that an overarching communications plan should be developed, as per Action C1. Actions C2 – C6 will be part of the communications plan, but are given below for ease of reference. Timeframes are indicative but subject to review as part of the development of the communications plan.

Communicating College Innovation

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue / Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
C1	Improved recognition and visibility of college innovation activities through co-ordinated communications	Develop an overarching communications plan for the College Innovation agenda	<p>Convene a working group to liaise with College/SFC/ Stakeholder communications teams to co-ordinate promotion of college innovation</p> <p>Explore resources within Colleges to support joint marketing and communications on a pan-Scotland basis</p>	<p>To be established – ongoing work.</p> <p>See C3 for previous and future led activity</p>	<i>CIWG</i> – tbc <i>SFC</i> - Stephen Crowe	Deadline: April 2017 TBC
C2	Wider recognition of College Innovation	RSE to be brought in to assist with the high level communication's strategy	CIWG members to liaise with RSE to identify opportunities for profile raising and further promotion	RSE have agreed to further support this agenda following a presentation given to the RSE by AC.	<i>SFC</i> - Stephen Crowe <i>CIWG</i> - Audrey Cumberland <i>SFC</i> - Andrew Youngson	Deadline: April 2017 – ongoing
C3	National Overview report/communication with associated case studies e.g. College support to businesses, Innovation Vouchers	Draw together key information	Identify any existing information that can be used and address any gaps for further data collection	Ongoing	<i>SFC</i> - Andrew Youngson <i>SFC</i> - Morven Pritchard <i>CDN</i> - Candy Munro	Deadline: April 2017 - ongoing
C4	Sharing Information on innovative college activities	Identify 'Innovation Champions' within the sector. Work with CDN/ESP to share practice and information	Identify colleges who have developed opportunities creatively, or tackled issues, that might be shared more widely with others.	Feb 2017 - CDN – Led ICs event with Curriculum Mangers. Highlighting of the work of the ICs' was well received	<i>SFC</i> - Andrew Youngson <i>SFC</i> - Morven Pritchard	Deadline: April 2017 - ongoing

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue / Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
C5	Sharing Information on innovative college activities	Decide whether a Conference to highlight College Innovation and best practice would be valuable	Identify colleges who have developed opportunities creatively, or tackled issues, that might be shared more widely with others.	Ongoing	<i>SFC</i> - Andrew Youngson <i>SFC</i> - Morven Pritchard	Deadline: March 2017
C6	Improved recognition and visibility of college innovation activities	Host innovation events/ workshops to share best practice within the sector and with other stakeholders	Liaise with sector, stakeholders and CDN/ESP	<p><i>SFC</i> Innovation Event held at the Parliament to highlight Innovation, MSP Shirley-Anne Somerville and MSP Ross Greer spoke favourably of College led innovation work.</p> <p>The James Frew/West College Scotland case study was promoted at the Scottish Funding Council's Pecha Kucha Scottish Innovation event in the Scottish Parliament on the 23rd March.</p> <p>AC – asked to join the Enterprise & Skills Review group, Innovation Workstream –first meeting on 29 March 2017</p> <p>Presentation on CIWG given to Colleges Scotland Event –</p>	<i>CDN</i> - tbc <i>CS</i> - tbc <i>With SFC support</i>	Deadline: throughout 2017 exact dates TBC

Action Reference	Barrier/Issue / Opportunity	Solution	Further actions / Work required to implement solution	Work to Date	Lead for Action	Timeframe for delivery
				<p>presentation on College Innovation -31 March</p> <p>CIWG now has a presence on the Can Do Action Plan</p> <p>AC has attended the Innovation Forum on 6 June highlighting work of CIWG</p> <p>September College Innovation launch event – due to take place on 11 September in tandem with the opening of the CSIC</p>		

Key to abbreviations in table

CPWG: College Principals Working Group, SFC: Scottish funding Council, CDN: College Development Network, CS: Colleges Scotland
 ICs: Innovation Centres, IVs: Innovation Vouchers, RKEC: Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (SFC), ONS: Office of National Statistics, CSIS: Construction Scotland Innovation Centre, ESP: Energy Skills Partnership, WCS: West College Scotland, DAC: Dundee and Angus College, FVC: Forth Valley College

Annex 2: Membership of CIWG

Audrey Cumberland, Chair	Principal, SFC Board and RKEC member	West College Scotland
Ken Thomson	Principal, SFC Skills Committee member	Forth Valley College
Douglas Mundie	Council Member	Scottish Funding Council
Dr Siobhan Jordan	Director	Interface
Morven Cameron	Head of Academic Relationships	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Dr Keith Nicholson	Council Member	Scottish Funding Council
Stephen Good	CEO	Construction Innovation Centre
Stephen Sheridan	Skills Planning Manager	Skills Development Scotland
Bruce Newlands	Head of Technical Operations	Construction Scotland Innovation Centre
Ian Hughes	Director Strategic Partnerships	CiTB
Grant Ritchie	Principal	Dundee & Angus College
John Renwick	Sector Manager for Construction	Energy Skills Partnership
Jim Brown	Director	Energy Skills Partnership
James Boyce <i>(Brigitte Vogele deputising as required)</i>	Acting Head of College Policy	Scottish Government